IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant:	Alan COX	Confirmation No.:	6446
Application No.:	10/624,445	Art Unit:	2449
Filed:	July 22, 2003	Examiner:	A. B. Patel
Title:	ELECTRONIC MAIL CONTROL SYSTEM		

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

As required under § 41.37(a), this brief is filed after the Notice of Appeal filed in this case on June 22, 2010, and is in furtherance of said Notice of Appeal.

The fees required under § 41.20(b)(2), and any required petition for extension of time for filing this brief and fees therefor, are dealt with in the accompanying TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF.

This brief contains items under the following headings as required by 37 C.F.R. § 41.37 and M.P.E.P. § 1205.2:

I.	Real Party In Interest
II	Related Appeals and Interferences
III.	Status of Claims
IV.	Status of Amendments
V.	Summary of Claimed Subject Matter
VI.	Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal
VII.	Argument
VIII.	Claims
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Appendix B	Evidence
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I.   REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Red Hat, Inc., the assignee of record.

II.   RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this appeal.

III.   STATUS OF CLAIMS

A.   Total Number of Claims in Application

There are 16 claims pending in application.

B.   Current Status of Claims

1.   Claims canceled: 1, 4-7, and 9-17

2.   Claims withdrawn from consideration but not canceled: None

3.   Claims pending: 2, 3, 8 and 18-30

4.   Claims allowed: None

5.   Claims rejected: 2, 3, 8 and 18-30

C.   Claims On Appeal

The claims on appeal are claims 2-3, 8, and 18-30

IV.   STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

All amendments that have been submitted have been accepted and Appendix A presents the pending claims including all amendments that have been accepted.

V.   SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The claimed subject matter relates to systems and methods for controlling access to electronic mail systems accessible to multiple users including one or more approvers (*i.e.*, ones who are permitted to exercise the control) and one or more persons who are subject to the control (*see* ¶ [0006]). In an electronic mail system embodying the claimed subject matter, for example, a child may receive electronic mail messages only once they have been approved by a parent (*i.e.*, an approver). Multiple individuals can have approval authority and the actions taken by each approver can be synchronized (Id.).

Referring to Figure 1, multiple devices, such as devices 110, 130 and wireless device 120, can be used to connect to network 100 to access a user's electronic mail (*see* ¶ [0017]). Device 110 may be used by a person with approval authority, such as a parent, and wireless device 120 may be used by another person with approval authority (Id.). Device 130 may be used by a person, such as a child, who needs to get electronic mail messages approved before the messages can be viewed (Id.).

The child's mail folders in device 130 includes unread folder 220 for storing child's incoming mail messages, read folder 222 for storing mail messages that have been read, trash folder 224 for storing deleted mail messages, and school folder 226 and friends folder 228 for storing mail messages related to school and friends, respectively (*see* ¶ [0019]). The child's mail folders may also include folders for storing outgoing messages, such as drafts folder 232 and sent folder 234. Drafts folder 232 stores outgoing messages that the child is preparing and sent folder 234 stores messages that the child has sent (Id.).

Before a message appears in unread folder 220 in device 130, it must be approved by one of the two approvers using devices 110 or 120 (*see* ¶ [0020]). Messages initially appear in incoming unapproved folder 210 in devices 110 and 120 (*see* ¶ [0021]). The messages that are approved are then moved to incoming approved folder 212 and the child's unread folder 220, whereas the messages that are not approved are moved to incoming deleted folder 214 (*see* ¶¶ [0021]-[0022]).

Message that the child sends appear in sent folder 232 (*see* ¶ [0024]). However, before the message can be delivered to the intended recipient it is copied to outgoing unapproved folder 240 (Id.). The message is not delivered until it is approved, at which point it is moved to outgoing approved folder 242 (Id.). If the message is not approved, it is moved instead to outgoing deleted folder 244 (Id.).

Claim 18 is presented in the table below, mapping the recited elements to the specification and figures:

Claim	Support in Specification
18. A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0006]; and FIG. 1.
routing an electronic message intended for a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user;	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0006]; ¶ [0020]; ¶ [0028]; ¶ [0030]; and FIG. 1.
presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;	*See*, for example, ¶ [0008]; ¶ [0017]; ¶ [0029]; and ¶ [0031].
determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0006]; ¶ [0020]; ¶ [0021]; and ¶ [0024].
routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved; and	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0006];

	¶ [0008]; ¶ [0021]; FIG. 1; and FIG. 2B.
once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.	*See*, for example, ¶ [0031].

Claim 26 is presented in the table below, mapping the recited elements to the specification and figures:

Claim	Support in Specification
26. A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0006]; and FIG. 1.
directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the outgoing electronic message being sent to the intended recipient;	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0010]; ¶ [0019]; ¶ [0024]; ¶ [0033]; ¶ [0034]; FIG. 1; and FIG. 2A.
presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;	*See*, for example, ¶ [0008]; ¶ [0017]; ¶ [0029]; and ¶ [0031].
determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or	*See*, for example, Abstract;

rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;	¶ [0006]; ¶ [0020]; ¶ [0021]; and ¶ [0024].
routing the electronic message to the recipient if the electronic message is approved; and	*See*, for example, Abstract; ¶ [0010]; FIG. 1; and FIG. 2A.
once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.	*See*, for example, ¶ [0031].

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

In the Office Action dated April 14, 2010, the Examiner rejected claims 2-3, 8, 18, 23-25, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0107950 A1 to Lu ("Lu") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087646 A1 to Hickey et al. ("Hickey"). The Examiner also rejected claims 2-3, 8, and 18-30 under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2006/0036701 to Bulfer ("Bulfer") and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0194177 to Sherman et al. ("Sherman").

The following summarize the grounds of rejection:

A. One question is whether the combination of Lu and Hickey discloses all of the elements recited in independent claim 18.

B. One question is whether the combination of Lu and Hickey discloses all of the elements recited in independent claim 26.

C. One question is whether the combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman discloses all of the elements recited in independent claim 18.

D. One question is whether the combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman discloses all of the elements recited in independent claim 26.

E. One question is whether the combination of Lu and Hickey or Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman discloses all of the elements recited in dependent claims 2, 3, 8, 19-25, and 27-30.

VII.　ARGUMENT

A.　The combination of Lu and Hickey does not disclose all of the elements recited in independent claim 18

We submit that the combination of Lu and Hickey does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 18. More specifically, we submit that the combination does not teach or suggest at least the following limitation of independent claim 18:

> once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the
> at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein
> the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to
> be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the
> indicator characterizing the changed status.

To satisfy the limitation set forth above for independent claim 18, the combination of Lu and Hickey must disclose notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message by, *e.g.*, providing to the at least one other approver an indicator, which is associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message. The Applicant submits that neither Lu nor Hickey nor the combination of Lu and Hickey teaches or suggests providing such indicator to the at lest one other approver.

The Examiner states that Lu fails to teach this notifying limitation, and the Applicant submits that Hickey also fails to teach the notifying limitation at least because Hickey provides no status indicators associated with independent copies of an electronic message as claimed.

The Examiner relies on Hickey for teaching, ". . . *notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message . . .*" Hickey describes status indicators (*e.g.*, status indicators 57yxz described in paragraph [0043]), but those status indicators are not associated with another approver's copy of the electronic message as the rejected claims require. Lu does not supply that which is missing from Hickey, because although Lu describes that an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients, Lu fails to teach or suggest the "notification" limitation of the rejected claims. The Examiner notes this deficiency on page 8 of the February 22, 2010 Office Action.

The amendments included in the Response dated October 21, 2009 add the requirement that (i) the approvers maintain independent copies of the message and (ii) actions taken by one approver with respect to that approver's copy of the message are conveyed to the other approver by associating an indicator with the other approver's copy of the message.

As the Examiner points out, Hickey describes an automated directing of electronic communications to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox of the group electronic mailbox. As described in paragraph [0040] of Hickey, each member of a group can specify a match criteria to define how an electronic communication is handled. Sending the communication to a specific mailbox is just one of several examples Hickey describes. The match criteria allow users to sort and otherwise dispose of incoming communications.

A key point is that Hickey describes electronic communications as unique entities, without reliance on copies, whereas independent claims 18 requires maintaining independent copies. Hickey describes routing and/or operating on incoming electronic communications, and associating status information with the communication based on those actions. Hickey, however, does not teach or suggest directing multiple, independent copies of a particular communication to different users' mailboxes. Doing so would go against the teachings or Hickey because Hickey relies on group mailboxes when two or more users need to view the same communication. Hickey repeatedly

describes the benefits of such shared communication, and the drawbacks of independent copies of communications in separate mailboxes. For example:

> "A group electronic mail (e-mail) mailbox is provided to enable multiple users to work collaboratively and simultaneously with one or more electronic communications received in the group e-mail mailbox. The group e-mail mailbox provides tools that allow members of a group to access and manipulate the received electronic communications." (Abstract).

> "The copies of the e-mail message in each member's box exist independently and are not linked. Electronic mailboxes are configured for use by only one user at a time. Thus, it is difficult for members of the group to coordinate their actions. For example, it can be difficult to establish whether any member of the group has responded to a particular received electronic communication without individually contacting each member of the group. It can also be difficult to obtain other status information such as how, when, and by whom in the group the communication is being processed. Information that should be made available in a timely manner to each group member may not be shared at all or at least not simultaneously." (paragraph [0005]).

> "Consequently, it can be difficult for different members of a group to work collaboratively without frequent telephonic or electronic communications across the whole group. Moreover, the lack of simultaneous sharing of all the electronic communications intended for use by the whole group can severely impair an efficient and coordinated functioning of a group." (paragraph [0008]).

> "In the present invention, a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications. The electronic communications reside in electronic mailbox that is accessible by members of the group. When an authorized member of the group takes an action with regard to the electronic communication, other members of the group can see what has been done." (paragraph [0016]).

> "Once the electronic communication is stored in the group electronic mailbox, any member of the group can view the stored electronic communication and any member of the group having an appropriate permission attribute can determine an appropriate response or an action responsive to the electronic communication. For example, an individual member of the group can select actions from a set of response tools for performing desired functions." (paragraph [0020]).

This theme is repeated throughout Hickey. The group mailboxes of Hickey remove the motivation for duplicating incoming messages. Hickey clearly teaches away from creating independent copies of electronic communications as required by the rejected claims.

Figure 7 of Hickey further demonstrates the above-described reliance on a group mailbox when an e-mail is directed to multiple users, rather than generating copies of the e-mail. Reference numbers 236, 244, 246, 249 and 240 describe a path associated with an e-mail destined for multiple users. When a comparison (reference 236) determines a match to a criteria template, notification recipients are determined (reference 244) and the corresponding recipients are notified (references 246 and 248). The associated e-mail is then delivered to a group mailbox (reference 240 through tab A). The notified members of the group can then access the e-mail through the group mailbox, and perform various acts on the e-mail (reference 265).

The Examiner further cites the following text from Hickey regarding the "notification" limitation in the rejected claims:

> From Hickey paragraph [0015]: "It is still a further aspect of the invention to provide an automatic method for updating and notifying members or users of a group of any changes in status information of received electronic communications, the received electronic communications are being continually operated on by multiple members or users of the group to cause changes in their statuses."

> From Hickey paragraph [0043]: "In response to acts by one member of group 22A1 that cause a status change, a signal is transmitted to update the associated status indicator 57A1 for any other group member viewing the status indicator 57A11."

The Applicant notes that neither of these descriptions satisfies the requirement of ". . . wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver <u>an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message</u> . . ." (emphasis added). The status changes referred to in these paragraphs concern modifications of one particular received message, and do not relate a change made to one approver's copy of an electronic message to another approver's copy of the same message. In other words, Hickey teaches that when any one of

several users modifies a received electronic communication, the status of that communication is updated so that other users viewing the communication will be notified of the modification.

The messages of Hickey are unique – no copies exist that need to be coordinated. This concept is described throughout Hickey. Paragraph [0043] describes a ". . . status indicator 57yxz for each of the one or more electronic communications 53yx . . ." (emphasis added). The 'z' index of the status indicator represents particular types of modification status, such as 'new', 'read', 'answered', etc., as shown in Figure 6 of Hickey. This figure clearly illustrates that each status indicator 57yxz corresponds to one and only one message, which all users in a particular group can view. When one user modifies an electronic communication, the status indicator changes so that other users are notified of the change when the other users view the electronic communication. For example, the status indicator of the first communication in Figure 6 changes from 'New' to 'Read' when any of the users reads that communication. Subsequent users are notified of this status change when they view the communication along with its associated status indicator.

Finally, on page 10 of the February 22, 2010 Office Action, the Examiner states, "The reasons why Hickey came up with this system and method is stated in para. [0007], 'some group members may be deprived of information regarding the received e-mail message and the actions taken by the other group members in connection with the message. In addition, there is limited control on the flow, distribution and processing of the information intended to be shared among the members of group 22.'"

In the cited text, Hickey describes disadvantages associated with prior art e-mail systems that create copies of an incoming e-mail in separate mailboxes (*i.e.*, "An e-mail 21 addressed to group 22 is received in the respective e-mail mailbox 201, 202 and 203 for the users U1, U2, and U3" paragraph [007]).

Hickey's solution to the disadvantage cited by the Examiner above is to created group mailboxes rather than instantiate copies of the e-mail in separate mailboxes. The Applicant's claim 18, on the other hand, recites independent copies of the electronic message and relates those copies

to one another through an indicator. Hickey is clearly teaching away from the Applicant's claimed subject matter.

B.   The combination of Lu and Hickey does not disclose all of the elements recited in independent claim 26

We submit that the combination of Lu and Hickey does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 26. More specifically, we submit that the combination does not teach or suggest at least the following limitation of independent claim 26:

> once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.

For the reasons set forth above for claim independent claim 18, neither Lu nor Hickey nor the combination of Lu and Hickey teaches or suggests the "notifying" limitation of independent claim 26.

C.   The combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman does not disclose all of the elements recited in independent claim 18

We submit that the combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 18. More specifically, we submit that the combination does not teach or suggest at least the following limitation of independent claim 18:

> once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.

To satisfy the limitation set forth above for independent claim 18, the combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman must disclose notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message by, *e.g.,* providing to the at least one other approver. The Applicant submits

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that neither Lu nor Bulfer nor Sherman nor any combination thereof teaches or suggests notifying

the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message, or any indicator

characterizing the changed status. At page 33 of the Office Action dated February 22, 2010, the

Examiner admits that neither Lu nor Bulfer teaches or suggests this limitation.

The Examiner cites the following text from Sherman regarding the "notification" limitation

recited in independent claim 18:

> From Sherman paragraph [0045]: "The folder hierarchy illustrated in FIG. 5
> represents a typical hierarchy that is created by the user on a server or desktop
> computer. When the user connects a companion device (such as an H/PC) to
> the server or desktop computer, a subset or the entire set of folders may be
> synchronized between the two systems. In order to identify which folders are
> to be synchronized, a flag or electronic code is set on a parent folder. That is,
> 'expanded' flag, which is set on a folder, pertains to the subfolder list of that
> folder and means that its subfolders will be synchronized. In this manner, the
> subfolders themselves are not necessarily individually marked in any way."

> From Sherman paragraph [0059]: "Referring now to FIG. 8A, an illustration
> of a graphical user interface (GUI) of a message list view is provided. It
> should be recognized that the following description is provided in terms of a
> GUI, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate from the ensuing
> description that other user interfaces are equally feasible, including text entry,
> voice activated input, touch screen, etc."

> From Sherman paragraph [0065]: "Referring now to FIG. 10, logical
> operations for synchronizing information, particularly an e-mail folder
> hierarchy, are illustrated. The synchronization operations synchronize
> subfolders of a particular folder; however they will do so only to the folders
> and subfolders designated in accordance with the principles of the present
> invention. In essence, the operations shown in FIG. 10 are executed for each
> folder, whose subfolders need to be synchronized. In this example, the
> synchronization operations work in connection with two subfolder lists of a
> particular folder - a server subfolder list, and a client subfolder list. The server
> list is the list of subfolders currently recognized by the server as being
> 'children' of the folder in question. The client list is the list of subfolders
> currently recognized by the client/companion device as being 'children' of the
> folder in question. The server and client lists correspond to stored records or
> objects, each potentially including a plurality of fields or properties, one of
> which is a 'parent' identification in the case of folder objects. These objects
> are stored in an object store (i.e., mail store) in each respective computer

system. The exemplary synchronization operation flow of FIG. 10 uses the server and client lists to determine folder/subfolder discrepancies between the systems, and synchronizes the lists accordingly. While the term 'subfolders' is used in connection with FIG. 10, it should be noted that this term includes folders or subfolders."

From Sherman paragraph [0075]: "In another example, a user may be provided with a GUI screen or other UI methodology to explicitly select subfolders that are to be excluded from the synchronization process."

The Applicant notes that none of these descriptions satisfies the requirement of "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message . . ." (emphasis added). In fact, nowhere in Sherman teaches or suggests the "notifying" limitation as recited by independent claim 18.

The synchronization described in Sherman cannot convey the change of status (i.e., approved, unapproved) because it does not teach or suggest any way of distinguishing approved and unapproved electronic message.

D.   The combination of Lu. Bulfer, and Sherman does not disclose all of the elements recited in independent claim 26

We submit that the combination of Lu, Bulfer, and Sherman does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 26. More specifically, we submit that the combination does not teach or suggest at least the following limitation of independent claim 26:

> once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.

For the reasons set forth above for claim independent claim 18, neither Lu nor Bulfer nor Sherman nor any combination thereof teaches or suggests the "notifying" limitation of independent claim 26.

E.   Dependent claims should be allowed

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As set forth above, independent claims 18 and 26 should be allowed. Since dependent claims 2-3 and 19-25 depend from allowable claim 18 and dependent claims 8 and 27-30 depend from allowable claim 26, those dependent claims should be allowed.

VIII. CLAIMS

A copy of the claims involved in the present appeal is attached hereto as Appendix A.

Applicant believes that fees required under § 41.20(b)(2) is addressed in the accompanying TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF. However, if any additional fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0219, under Order No. 0113715.00134US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 22, 2010

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APPENDIX A

Claims Involved in the Appeal of Application Serial No. 10/624,445

1.   (Cancelled)

2.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter.

3.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter.

4-7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 26, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user.

9-17.   (Cancelled)

18.   (Currently amended)   A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved; and

once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.

19.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message.

20.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 19, wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

21.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

22.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers by being routed to a single folder, accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations.

23.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations.

24.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy.

25.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy

26.   (Currently amended)   A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the outgoing electronic message being sent to the intended recipient;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the recipient if the electronic message is approved; and

once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status.

27.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message.

28.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 27, wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

29.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

30.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 26, wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers by being routed to a single folder accessible by the at least two approvers, from multiple devices at multiple locations.

<u>APPENDIX B</u>

No evidence pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 or entered by or relied upon by the examiner is being submitted.

APPENDIX C

No related proceedings are referenced in the section, titled "II. Related Appeals and Interferences" above, and hence no copies of decisions in related proceedings are provided.